

STATE OF MICHIGAN
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2000

NOTE 18 – OTHER LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

Discretely Presented Component Units

Michigan Education Trust (MET)

The MET offers contracts which, for actuarially determined amounts, provide future tuition at State institutions of higher education. Contract provisions also allow the benefits to be used at private or out-of-state institutions, with the amount provided being based upon rates charged by the State's public institutions of higher education. The tuition payments are made by MET as a separate legal entity and these contracts are not considered obligations of the State. The Legislature is not obligated to provide appropriations should losses occur and the statutes and contracts provide for refunds to the participants if MET becomes actuarially unsound. Liabilities have been recorded on the balance sheet for the actuarial present value of future tuition benefit obligations.

The 1988, 1989, and 1990 enrollments are known as Plans B and C. Enrollments after November 1995 are known as Plan D.

The actuarial report on the status of MET Plans B and C, as of September 30, 2000, shows the actuarial present value of future tuition obligations to be \$552.3 million, as compared to the actuarially determined market value of assets available of \$711.2 million. The actuarial assumptions used include: a projected tuition increase rate of 5.81% for the years through 2006 and 7.30% for subsequent years; and a discount rate of 6.20%.

The actuarial report on the status of MET Plan D, as of September 30, 2000, shows the actuarial present value of future tuition obligations to be \$80.6 million, as compared to the actuarially determined market value of assets available of \$87.2 million. The actuarial assumptions used include: a projected tuition increase rate of 5.81% for the years through 2006 and 7.30% for subsequent years; and a discount rate of 6.83%.

During 2000, MET changed the balance sheet presentation of the tuition benefit obligation by increasing the liability to include the present value of future contract payments expected to be collected from installment contract purchasers. There was no effect on net income or retained earnings as a result of the reclassification. This valuation method resulted in the recognition of a tuition benefit expense credit in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000.

On November 8, 1994, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled that MET is an integral part of the State of Michigan, and, thus, the investment income realized by MET is not currently subject to federal income tax. On August 20, 1996, the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 (the "1996 Tax Act") was signed into law which included a provision adding a new section to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 defining "qualified state tuition programs." A qualified state tuition program is generally exempt from income tax, but is subject to unrelated business income tax. MET has no unrelated business income. Distributions made in excess of contributions (whether to the refund designee, beneficiary, or to a college on behalf of the beneficiary) are taxable income to the beneficiary or the refund designee. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) was expected to release regulations in 2000, which would have clarified the 1996 federal legislation for qualified state tuition programs. In May 1997, MET submitted a request for ruling to the IRS for verification that MET is in compliance with the 1996 Tax Act. On December 23, 1997, the IRS issued a favorable ruling which confirms that MET is in compliance with the Act.